

bright link

A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR PROVIDER ABOUT

Genetic Testing

TAKE A DEEP BREATH. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

Ever wonder what your genes would tell you about your health? If you have a family history of cancer, you may want to consider taking a genetic test to determine if you have a genetic mutation that could increase your risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. We have a quick guide on what to expect from a genetic testing appointment so you can go in confident and prepared.

Do I need a genetic test?

Most individuals take a genetic test for cancer-related genetic mutations because they have risk factors like a family history of certain cancers that are often linked to genetic mutations. (Want to learn about your personal risk factors? Check out [Assess Your Risk™](#) to learn more about your breast and ovarian cancer risk.) If you think that you could potentially benefit from a genetic test, you should contact your healthcare provider or a genetic counselor to set up an appointment to discuss genetic testing.



Not 100% sure that you want a genetic test?

You can still set up an appointment to explore this option further. Providers and counselors are excellent resources who will give you more information and advice before ultimately letting you decide whether you want to test or not.

Do I need to bring anything to this initial appointment?



Before you go to your appointment, you should collect your family's health history. Note which relatives developed cancer, when they were diagnosed, what type of cancer they developed, and their current health status. (You can use our handy [Family Health History Form](#) to help you keep track of everything!). Have any of your relatives received genetic testing? Get copies of their complete results for your appointment. You may also want to bring a copy of your [Assess Your Risk](#) results to show your provider or counselor other risk factors you may have for breast and ovarian cancer. Don't forget to write down questions you have about genetic testing – you may want to talk with your family and get their questions as well.



Find a Genetic Counselor

Use this tool from the National Society of Genetic Counselors to search for a qualified provider near you.

What can I expect at my initial appointment?



EMPOWERED
PATIENT GUIDE:

GENETIC
TESTING

FAMILY HISTORY DISCUSSION



Your **Family Health History form** will really come in handy here! As part of the appointment, your provider or counselor will typically chat with you about your family's history of cancer and draw a pedigree. This diagram will show which relatives developed cancer and help your provider or counselor determine if any cases could be linked to genetic mutations.

Using information from your family tree and from your personal health history, your provider or counselor may use a clinical assessment tool to determine your breast and ovarian cancer risk. Your provider or counselor will give you an idea of what your risk is for developing breast and ovarian cancer in your lifetime and how your risk may change over time.

RISK ASSESSMENT



GENETIC TESTING OPTIONS



As part of the appointment, you should discuss what options you have for genetic testing and what (if any) test your provider or counselor recommends. This is a good time to talk to your provider or counselor about how much a test will cost and whether your insurance will cover it. Be sure to ask about the benefits and drawbacks of any test as well as any additional questions you may have about the testing process or about how your results may affect your healthcare, employment, or insurance.

Your provider or counselor may also give you information on actions you can take before or after testing to reduce your risk of developing cancer. While you won't necessarily know what steps are best before you get your results, you can still put together a general strategy for managing your breast and ovarian cancer risk.

RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS



MAKING A DECISION



Following your risk assessment and discussion of different options, you will have the chance to decide whether you want to get a genetic test. You don't have to decide right away if you would like more time or want to talk to your family. However, if you decide you are ready to test, you may have the ability to give a sample of your DNA for testing at this initial appointment.

NEXT STEPS



Regardless of your decision, talk to your provider or counselor about the next steps you should take – whether that is setting up an appointment to test or making a game plan to manage your risk.



TIP:

Interested in an at-home test? Want to learn more about insurance coverage for genetic tests? Check out [Explore Your Genetics](#) to learn more about your genes and other options for genetic testing.

How do I pay for a genetic test?

Depending on your family history, your insurance may cover the testing cost. Ask your health-care provider or genetic counselor whether your insurance typically covers the genetic test they recommend. You can also ask your provider or counselor for the billing codes they use for different genetic tests so you can check with your insurance to see if they will cover the recommended testing. In some cases, your insurance may only pay for a genetic test if you meet certain requirements, such as having a close relative with a genetic mutation. If your insurance will not cover any genetic testing, you can look for financial assistance programs for different genetic tests or labs.

What can I expect when it comes time to test?

Your genetic testing experience will vary based on your health and family information as well as the discussions you have with your provider. If you complete a blood test, a health professional will insert a needle into your arm to draw a blood sample for testing. Your sample will be sent to a lab to process the test.

What happens after I take the test?

You will normally receive your results a few weeks after you send in your test. Your results will indicate that you are positive for a mutation in a gene variant connected to cancer, negative for a mutation in a gene variant connected to cancer, or you have a variant of unknown or uncertain significance. (Check out [Explore Your Genetics](#) to learn more). If you haven't by this point, you should schedule an appointment to review your results and talk about your risk management plan with a provider or counselor. Typically, your DNA results will be uploaded to your medical record and your sample will be destroyed, unless your provider needs to order more tests to determine your risk. In this case, the lab will store it until those tests are complete.

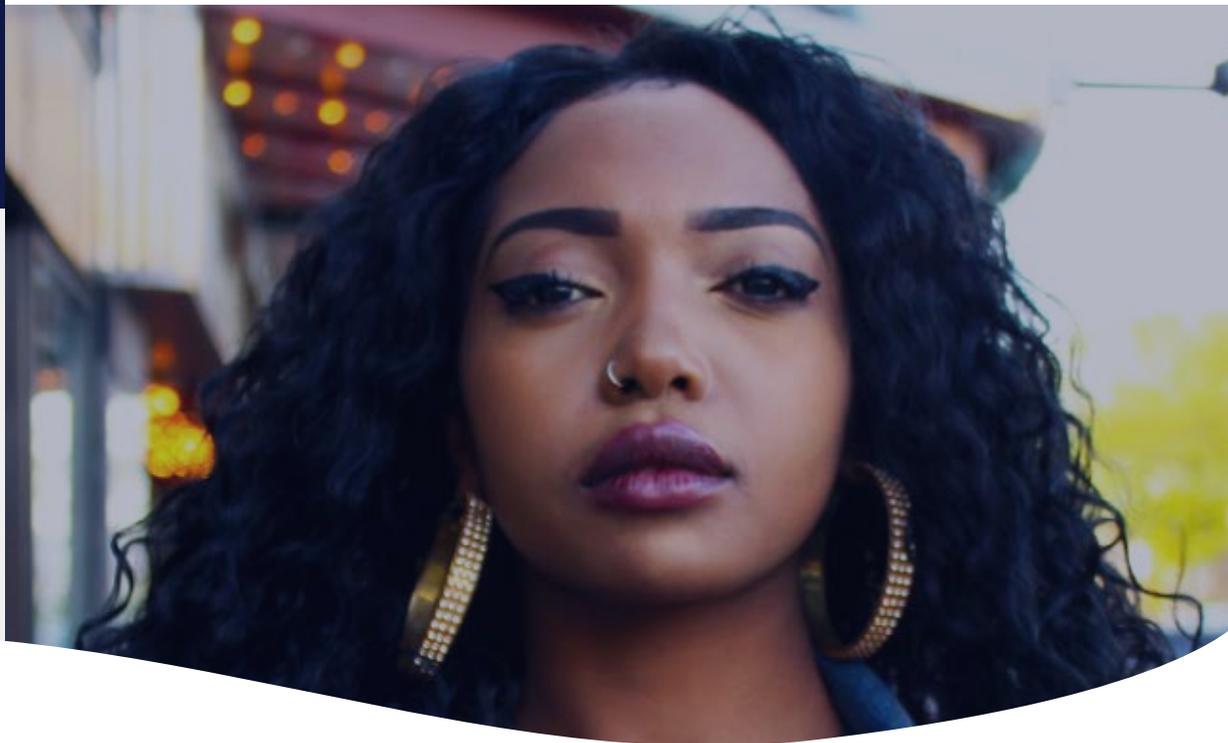


Variant of Unknown/ Uncertain Significance (VUS):

A VUS result indicates that some part of your genetic code looks different from the "normal" coding for a gene. However, researchers don't yet know whether or not this difference has any connection to cancer risk.

BRIGHT PINK is a national non-profit on a mission to help save lives from breast and ovarian cancer by empowering women to know their risk and manage their health proactively.

For more information or to get involved, visit BrightPink.org.



Have more questions about breast and ovarian cancer prevention?
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